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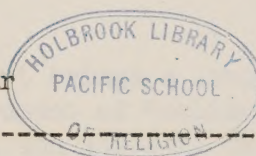
under the auspices of

the WORLD COUNCIL of CHURCHES (in process of formation)
the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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GREAT BRITAIN

The Church and the Atom

A report entitled "The Church and the Atom: A Study of the Moral and Theological Aspects of Peace and War" has been published by a Commission appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York at the request of the Church Assembly "to consider the Report of the British Council of Churches' Commission on 'The Era of Atomic Power'." In May 1946, this Commission declared that "democracy" was the solution to the atomic problem. The present Commission describes this idea as "altogether too facile", and emphasises the dangerous possibilities of such notions as "a world safe for democracy". It condemns "undefined and unlimited war aims" and emphasises that "the whole law of nations, whether in peace or in war, depends ultimately upon the observance of good faith" and so upon common standards derived from the law of God.

After a chapter on the Laws of War saying that "the divine law imposes certain irremovable limitations upon the rights and powers of all political authority", the report discusses "Christian Duty in a World of Power." It shows the dangers of failure to realise the limitations of science owing to the abstractions on which it is built, which involves "the fragmentation of truth", and, turning to the political problem, it discusses the failure of the League of Nations and of various other schemes for international order based on "the perpetuation of some particular map."

The report repudiates the argument which would attribute the evils of our day to the "doctrine of sovereignty", since the word "sovereignty" is "merely a convenient descriptive term for stating a political fact". It recognises the valuable part played during the last century by functional organisations of an international character and, speaking of the difficulty of controlling atomic energy, urges a recall to "natural law" among nations.

Regarding the attitude of the U.S.S.R., which believes to possess already the "true secret of international order", the report states that there exists today one great Power that has "shown itself thus far completely unwilling to cooperate for the promotion of an order based on free association". "The rulers of the

U.S.S.R.... nurse with an intensity like that of a religious faith the conviction that they are designed by destiny to incorporate the whole of mankind in the order of which they are themselves the guiding and controlling force. They hold, moreover, that the times are ripe and the omens auspicious for an immense extension of the order in which they believe... It would, therefore, be foolish from their point of view to allow any interference from those countries with the area already in their power, whether in the economic or the military sphere..." What should be the Christian attitude in this respect? The report states that "there are those who would say that the solution is to counter aggression by love. Ultimately that may be true. But is it applicable to the problem that confronts us? Or, to put it in another way, is it not the case that love demands chief consideration for those who are threatened by aggression?"

On the question of War Aims, the report brings a long discussion of the use of the atomic bomb as essentially an instrument of "obliteration" and of "psychological" warfare. It regards Hiroshima and Nagasaki as "striking testimony of the evil that follows upon undefined and unlimited war aims". The Commission also "think, not unreasonably in the light of recent experience, that, in any conflict of the sort that is conceivable in the world we know today, on one side at least there would be repudiation of the fundamental postulates on which the notion of 'just' warfare rests; and that in such circumstances it would be ridiculous to expect the belligerents on the other side, however law-abiding in the normal way, to prejudice their chances of success by maintaining restraints that their opponents abandoned."

Coming to the problem of "Just Causes", the Commission, considering the Historical and Theological Background, suggests that "the unity of any society is ultimately of a religious kind, even though the religion be false or even idolatrous, as in the case of state-worship". It discusses the suggestion that "the judgments of God frequently involve indiscriminateness", and, considering Morality in Warfare, with special reference to the traditional doctrine of "the just war", it declares that the just war should be considered as "a remedy for international delinquency, not as a means of making disciples of all nations".

The conclusions of the report on bombing amount to "considerable restriction on the use of strategic bombing", remembering always "that the object of warfare is not to kill the enemy, but to disarm and so overpower him". E.P.S.Geneva

U.S.S.R.

An Archbishop Appeals to Western Christians

Archbishop Luka of Crimea - who in civilian life is Professor Voino-Yasenetsky and who was awarded in 1945 the Stalin Prize for developing new methods in the treatment of suppurating diseases and wounds - writing in the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, official organ of the Russian Orthodox Church, appealed to Christians in "Anglo-Saxon countries" to thwart "the bloody plans of their militarists".

The Archbishop's plea, addressed especially to the people of the United States and Great Britain, recalls the fate of such historical conquerors as Tamerlane, Alexander the Great, Napoleon and Hitler. Archbishop Luka urged western Christians to remember the lessons of the Bible and what happened to "pale Belshazar,

who saw the handwriting on the wall, and the Assyrians whom the Lord exterminated for attempting to capture Jerusalem". Asserting that the United States are "fearful of the inevitable approach of Socialism and Communism", Archbishop Luka declared that "this fear is well founded, because if Communism did not enjoy the sympathy of millions its enemies would have no need to reach for atom bombs".

As to the relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Soviet government Archbishop Luka said the Russian clergy "lives at full peace with the government because the latter has given the Church full freedom and does not interfere with its internal affairs... Materialism, which is the ideological basis of Communism, is completely alien to the Orthodox Church, but "this does not prevent us from seeing all the good, full of social truth, that the new state system has brought us, and we welcome it with pure hearts".

E.P.S. Geneva

JAPAN

Bishop Neill's Visit to Japan

On his Far Eastern journey on behalf of the World Council of Churches Bishop Stephen Neill has recently visited Japan. His visit resulted in the acceptance by the Kyodan (United Church) and the Sei Kokwai (Anglican Church) of membership in the World Council.

Bishop Neill, accompanied by Dr. Decker, Secretary of the International Missionary Council, had also interviews with the Emperor and General MacArthur. Concerning the interview with the Emperor he writes: "The Emperor spoke feelingly of the moral and spiritual deterioration that had been brought about by the war among the people of Japan, and his desire that spiritual forces from outside should cooperate with those within Japan in the recovery of a better moral standard. He expressed the desire that Japan as it now is for friendship with all nations."

Concerning the interview with General MacArthur Bishop Neill writes: "The General himself is a devout though undogmatic Christian. He has never concealed his conviction that, for Japan, democracy and acceptance of the basic principles of Christianity must go together. Christianity, as he sees it, with its insistence on the value of human personality, on rectitude in conduct and purity of heart, is the greatest idea in the world". "But, said the General, if you agree that now is the chance to bring the Japanese people under the direct influence of Christian teaching, your missionary enterprise is on far too small a scale. You have something like twelve hundred missionaries; you want to multiply your effort about a hundredfold. In the past the missionary has gathered round him a little flock of faithful Christians; their life has been inward-looking, they have been a segregated flock. Now you have got to get your message out broadcast. The only way is for the missionary to create an immense army of Japanese who will go out to be missionaries to their own people, and get this message out to the whole nation. That is going to cost money. But the generosity of Christian people, when they see a need is illimitable. If you can get the Christian world convinced of the greatness of the call, surely there is no doubt of its rising to the height of the opportunity."

E.P.S. Geneva

DENMARKThe Problem of Ordained Women

For the first time in Denmark a woman is probably going to be allowed to become a pastor. The church press reports that one of the so-called "Grundtvigian" congregations in Nørre Alslev, on the Island of Falster, has appointed Miss Anderson as its pastor.

This decision aroused lively discussion everywhere. Hitherto the Danish Constitution had forbidden the ordination of women. This law has now been rescinded and the new law gives the Bishops freedom to ordain a woman. But the law is formulated in such a way that, if in future a Bishop rejects his right to supervise a parish and its pastors, the State Department for Church Affairs is entitled to request another Bishop to take control of the parish in question. The law had to be formulated in this way, because the Bishop of Falster, Dr Plum, refused to ordain Miss Anderson as pastor of the Church at Nørre Alslev. This parish was therefore placed under the control of the diocese of Fünen, whose Bishop, Dr Øllgaard, was willing to ordain her.

Out of the 9 Lutheran Bishops, 7 (including Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard) issued a declaration against the admission of women to the ministry and "deploring" that the Parliament had passed this law. They pointed out that the law had been enacted, in spite of the disapproval of the majority of Bishops and of many pastors, and without taking account of the precedent that was being set in other countries.

In reply to the question whether the teaching and practice of the Church were altered by the ordination of a woman, the Bishops maintained that this was not a question of Church doctrine but of Church order. It would not be true to say that the practice of the Danish Church had actually been modified, since this is only an exceptional case, against which the majority of the Bishops gave warning and urged that the number of such exceptions should not increase.

In spite of the tension evoked by this affair in wide circles, it is sufficient for the unity of the Church if there is agreement concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments (Augsburg Confession, Article 7). The Bishops therefore urge that the matter be carefully considered. There are already sharp conflicts within the Danish national Church, not only between different tendencies, but also concerning questions of decisive importance (re-marriage of divorced persons, for instance). In these questions every clergyman acts according to his own conscience and the unity of the Church as a whole has not been broken.

The declaration of the Bishops finally points out that everyone concerned - notwithstanding their well-founded misgivings - should consider the terrible results of a schism just at a time when unity and cooperation within the Church are the only things which can save the Danish people from moral and religious decay.

This declaration of the Bishops was instigated by a sharp protest made by a group of pastors in the Danish national Church, expressing their opposition to the ordination of women; they emphasise, however, that they did not wish to cut themselves off from the national Church.

This group of pastors are already talking about a "Confessing Front" within the national Church. It is impossible to estimate yet, whether the matter will have consequences for the relationship between Church and State in Denmark, and possibly influence a future Church Constitution. E.P.S.Geneva

SWITZERLANDVisit of the Armenian Archbishop, Surmeyan

Archbishop Artavazd Surmeyan, the apostolic representative of the Armenian Catholicos for the diocese of Europe, recently paid his first visit to the Armenian colony in Switzerland. On April 18, Armenians from all over Switzerland crowded into the English Church in Geneva to hear mass and the sermon.

In his sermon the Archbishop expressed his satisfaction in seeing how much the Armenians in Switzerland loved their Church. He spoke of the beauties of Armenia, which he visited in 1945 for the enthronement of the Catholicos of all the Armenians, Kevork VI. He ended by exhorting the Armenian mothers to teach their children the Armenian language, and the bases of the Armenian religion, which had been the rallying-force of the nation for centuries.

While in Geneva, the Archbishop visited the headquarters of the World Council of Churches, where he discussed the participation of the Armenian Church in the Assembly at Amsterdam with the General Secretary, Dr W.A. Visser 't Hooft and some of his colleagues. E.P.S.Geneva

NETHERLANDSInternational Congress of Old Catholics

The 15th International Congress of Old Catholics will meet in Hilversum from August 17-21. The last Congress of Old Catholic Christians was held in 1948 in Zurich. The forthcoming conference is the first large official meeting of representatives of Old Catholic Churches, and other Churches sympathetic to them, to be held since the war. Convenors are the Archbishop of Utrecht, Dr Andreas Rinkel, and the Bishops of the Utrecht Union in Holland, Germany, Austria, Poland, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and the United States. E.P.S.Geneva

INDIAA Young Church Starts a Mission

On February 7, 1948 some lay members of the Telugu Church Council met at Cuddapah, India, and planned to found a Missionary Society. They convened a conference at Jammalamadugu on February 21 and 22, which 400 members attended. It was felt even after 150 years existence of 350 Foreign Societies in India that not a single society had become indigenous and that Indians should become very soon independent and self-sufficient in free India. All the members subscribed Rs.1500 on the spot and promised Rs.1000 for an Independent Society. The conference expressed gratitude for all that the London Missionary Society had done in the past and appointed a sub-committee to draft the constitution of the new Society. EPS. Geneva

CZECHOSLOVAKIAFor Those Who Do Not Wish To Work On
Sundays

The Synodal Council of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren has sent a petition to the President of the Central Committee of Action, asking that people who, for reasons of conscience, do not wish to take part in reconstruction

work organised by the Government on Sundays, but are prepared to do so on week-days, should not be regarded as hostile to it.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYAgainst the New School Law

The new law applying to schools in Berlin prohibits denominational schools, both public and private. The Evangelical weekly "Die Kirche", reports on April 4, that the Fraternal Council of the Confessing Church in Berlin sent a letter on March 12 to the magistrate of Greater Berlin, expressing their attitude to this law. The letter points out that the new regulations are less favourable than those enforced by the High Command on April 2, 1946.

"We object", says the letter, "that the new school law excludes all possibility of organising Christian schools as part of the state school system. We are speaking here for many parents who have expressed their desire for Christian schools in which all the teaching is given by Christian teachers, and harmonises with the training given in a Christian home. Many of these parents voted for the Socialist parties, but these parties have not carried out the voters' wishes on this question. In our opinion the City Council should not have assumed that the majority wanted to abolish denominational schools. They should have tried to find a solution, which took everyone's wishes into account. We cannot give the exact number of those who want to have Christian schools. But in any case it is very considerable."

The letter also protested against the dissolution of the colleges (Gymnasien) in view of their importance for theological studies.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANYMessage Concerning the Jewish Question

At its meeting on April 7 and 8, in Darmstadt, the Fraternal Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany drew up a "Message concerning the Jewish Question". This message, with its advice and its insistence on repentance, will be a spiritual help to pastors and church members, for the right Biblical attitude to the Jewish question and for their own thought and action.

The message begins by expressing the regret of the Fraternal Council, that no general message had so far been published concerning what happened to the Jews in the past. It therefore thanks the German pastors and church members for "finding, and expressing this message and suffering for it". The Fraternal Council also thanks "all those who have thereby erected warning signs, both at home and abroad".

The Fraternal Council perceives the danger that the same evil spirit may be conjured up again. "Now that we are suffering for the sins we committed against the Jews, there is a growing danger that we may turn away from God's judgment to a new form of anti-Semitism". But "in this danger and temptation, God's Word confronts us and helps us to think and act rightly towards the Jews."

In the second part of the message, a number of principles are drawn up for the relationship between the Jews and the Christian Church, on the basis of

Holy Scripture. The principle is laid down that Christians must regard the fate of the Jewish people in the light of Christ "the Son of God, who was born a Jew". "By crucifying the Messiah, Israel repudiated its own vocation and mission". But the Church should not therefore brand the Jews as "solely responsible for the Crucifixion of Christ... Since the time of Christ, and through Him, the grace of election has passed from Israel to the Church, which consists of people of all nations, Jews and Gentiles. The Church must not therefore make a division between the Christian Jews and the non-Christian Jews. It should wait for "the erring children of Israel to resume the place reserved for them by God."

The Church must recognise the Jew as its "erring brother" who is nevertheless destined for Christ, and whom God has never forsaken. The Church must therefore love him, and call him, just because the fate of the Jews is "a silent sermon" showing that "God is not mocked".

The Fraternal Council adds: "It was a fatal mistake for the modern Churches to treat the Jewish question purely from the secular point of view of humanitarianism, emancipation and anti-Semitism... The Word of God teaches us, to our shame and sorrow, how we have failed in our duty to the Jews. And now we are faced by the judgments of God, to which we submit in sincere repentance."

The third part of the Message urges the Church to recognise the "mysterious affinity" between Israel and the Church, which is part of the will of God in obedience to the witness of the Old and New Testaments." Christians should help "to make good the wrong that has been done..."

"We turn especially to you", the message goes on, "who are descended from the seed of Abraham, and who now confess by God's grace that Jesus Christ, the Crucified and the Risen Lord, is the Saviour through Whom you are blessed as the children of God. We ask you to keep in mind this miracle of divine mercy, and not to think only of what men have done to you - men who were baptised with the same baptism as yourselves and who are called, together with you, to fellowship within the Body of Christ.

"We know how difficult we have made it for you, through our silence and our lack of love, to believe that the time of salvation has come, in which Jews and Gentiles will praise God together with one accent, for His mercy and His truth."

Finally, the Christians of Jewish origin are urgently requested "not to form Churches of their own, but to remain with us, to listen with us to God's Word, to learn, to teach, and to praise God for His mighty acts." E.P.S.Geneva

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

New Theological Review

Up to the present there has been no scientific review of Protestant theology in Czechoslovakia - a lack which has been greatly regretted especially by the young pastors of the different Protestant Churches. At the end of April, however, a new publication called "Theologia evangelica" is to appear, which will meet this need. It will appear four times a year under the auspices of the John Hus Faculty in Prague and the Protestant Faculty of Bratislava. E.P.S.Geneva

